

Native Prairie UPDATE



VOLUME 9 - FALL 2000

Welcome to our fall issue of the Native Prairie Update! For those of you who have just become voluntary stewards - the Update is our way of keeping in touch with you and providing a forum for landowners to share their experiences managing native prairie.

As you will see in this issue, we have provided highlights of several Native Prairie Projects developed by landowners. Through interviews with Marjorie Ball of Dodsland and Connie Chaplin of Fort Qu'Appelle - as well as descriptions of demonstration sites used for workshops at Denzil, Neilburg, Biggar and Blaine Lake - we hope to show you what other stewards are doing.

And we would also like to show you what our partners are doing. In addition to regular "field work," the Saskatchewan Wetland Conservation Corporation staff joined several partner agencies in hosting at least 15 tours this summer. We would like to thank all the cooperators who discussed their farm and ranch management plans with our tour groups.

An additional acknowledgement goes out to the funders who make initiatives of the Native Prairie Stewardship Program possible. We encourage you to read the "Partner Profile" which shows the Canada Trust Friends of the Environment Foundation's role in the Regina Plain Native Prairie Seed Nursery.

And now we would like you to play a role in the future direction of our program. Over the next several months we will be conducting a telephone survey to assess attitudes about the program, the newsletter and information provided. If you have any additional ideas for us, stop by our booth at the Canadian Western Agribition from November 20 - 25. We look forward to seeing you!

On a final note, we would like to welcome back Native Prairie Stewardship Program coordinator Lesley Hall who has been on maternity leave.

Kerry Hecker, Ecologist
Native Prairie Stewardship

Native Prairie Connects Owner to Past

By Myrna MacDonald

For Marjorie Ball, the 230 acres of native prairie that her family has owned for nearly a half-century is more than just reliable pasture land.

It's a place where she has come with her husband or her two children to walk, to pick flowers and to dream of how things once were.

"We used to go over to the pasture and hike around on a lovely morning or late in the day at sunset," said Ball, who lives north of Dodsland, Sask. "There's just some feeling about that place - you sort of have a foot in both worlds. Out there, I can imagine what it was like for my parents when they first came out here."

Ball's father - who immigrated from Devonshire, England, in 1906 - was one of the first homesteaders to settle in the area southeast of Kerrobert. Ball's English-born mother took her first wagon ride across the rolling, roadless prairie in 1915, travelling from Kerrobert with her sister and new brother-in-law to an isolated homestead north of the fledgling town of Dodsland.

"It was in March and it must have been an early spring because there were already sloughs. She said they could hear frogs croaking - they had never heard that sound before. She told me she never liked the country as much as she did in those early days. The grasses and flowers were just beautiful."

Today, few Saskatchewan residents will ever see the wild beauty and variety of grasses, shrubs and flowers growing on uncultivated land. Only 17 per cent of the province's original native prairie remains, with less than two per cent of unbroken prairie left in agricultural areas like west central Saskatchewan.

Fortunately, Ball isn't the only person who feels a connection to the native prairie. More

than 400 landowners are conserving and managing their small parcels of prairie through the Native Prairie Stewardship program that's offered by the Saskatchewan Wetland Conservation Corporation (SWCC).

As voluntary stewards, landowners agree to maintain and protect their native prairie, and to notify the Conservation Corporation about any land use changes or plans to transfer ownership of the prairie. In return, program staff and partner organizations can help landowners with questions about rotational grazing, native grass and plant species, or wildlife habitat.

Four-year-old Clark McMaster lends a helping hand at the Regina Plain Native Prairie Seed Nursery established through the Native Prairie Stewardship Program. The nursery, which is only in its second year, is already producing an abundance of seed which will be used for a restoration project at the University of Regina next year.



Photo by:

Robin McMaster



"Most people who own native prairie are taking care of it as best as they can," said Kerry Hecker, an ecologist with the Conservation Corporation in Regina. "This program simply recognizes their efforts and lets them know there are others who value the prairie as well."

Ball's piece of native prairie, about four miles northwest of her family's farm, was part of a half-section of land that her father-in-law bought in the 1950s. After he died, the land's title was transferred to Ball's husband Bill, who decided to break about 80 acres of the light, sandy soil and use it for crop production. The Balls fenced the remaining native prairie and used it as pasture for their cattle herd.

The couple soon discovered unique mementos of the past in their prairie, including the wide ruts of an old, well used wagon trail which winds along the valleys,

then travels southeast to northwest on the flat stretches.

"When the first ruts got too deep, it looks like they would span them and make another two ruts, so it's quite a wide trail. It's very noticeable after the grass dies down, and of course, you soon know about it when you drive the truck across the trail - bang, bump, bang."

As well, Ball remembered jogging around the edges of three large, concentric circles that were imprinted into the ground near the pasture's main gate. She has asked people about the circles for years, but no one has ever been able to explain their significance.

The prairie pasture has also provided the Balls with beautiful scenes like the purple haze of spring crocuses growing on the hills. Another unforgettable moment happened one early winter morning when the couple watched

prairie chickens perform their curious dance.

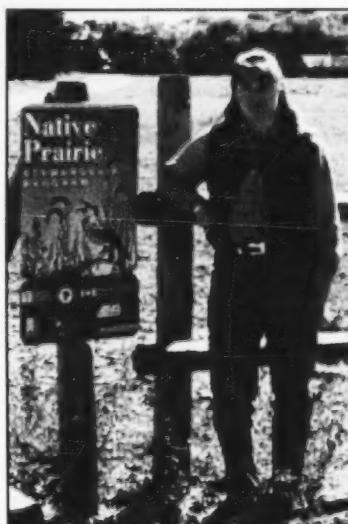
Ball, now widowed, rents the half section containing the native prairie to a neighbour for pasture and hay land. Her rental agreement limits the number of cattle that can be grazed on the property.

"After my husband sold all of our cattle, he seeded the broken land to tame grass, so it's all back to pasture again," said Ball, who doesn't believe it makes sense to break up any more of the light, rolling land that makes ideal pasture.

She doesn't visit her prairie very much any more, but Ball treasures its ability to connect her to the past. "I'm very sensitive to atmosphere - sometimes I really like a place, while other times, I'll never like a place yet I can't say why. But I've always felt good out in the pasture. Oh yes, indeed."

Connie Chaplin is passionate about native prairie

by Stan Bartlett



Connie Chaplin

It's a little piece of native prairie in the Qu'Appelle Valley that time and progress have forgotten, and Connie Chaplin of Rocking C Ranch wants to keep Coulee 27 that way.

With assistance from the Native Prairie Stewardship Program, launched in 1995 by the Saskatchewan Conservation Wetland Corporation (SWCC), she is restoring 20 acres of cultivated land back to native prairie plant species. It's the first step in a long-term plan to restore 260 acres over the next several years.

"The breath of fresh air you get, the song of the birds - it's revitalising and very wholesome," said Chaplin. The nature preserve is home to such wildlife as eagles, bear, beaver and deer, and surprisingly, two secretive wolverines.

"My younger children love it as much as I do and that's really important. My daughter can identify lots of plants and she's going to plant her own little prairie garden by her playhouse in the yard. When you can instill that love for something you know it will be instilled into her children."

Many landowners have decided to protect their native prairie land by donating or selling it to conservation agencies like the SWCC, Ducks Unlimited or the Native Conservancy of Canada. Instead, Chaplin plans to set up their estate so the sanctuary will be protected forever.

On her ranch in the Fort Qu'Appelle district, Chaplin helps her husband Jim raise bison, elk, reindeer, and white tail deer, sell supplies for game farms and wildflower honey, manage the restored Hudson's Bay Company Store Mall and a good-sized grain operation with 200 head of cattle. As well, her husband owns Woodland Home and Building Supplies in Fort Qu'Appelle.

Their goal is to be completely self-sufficient on the farm. Said Chaplin, "We're very busy - we're zoom people."

But now, her consuming passion is to restore the remnant of native prairie in the Qu'Appelle Valley between Echo Lake Provincial Park and Fort Qu'Appelle. In the future, they may build a lodge there and cater to eco-tourists, said Chaplin.

Last summer, site preparation began.

Chaplin and her family gathered wild native grass and forb seeds from Coulee 27. The seeds were cleaned by Canadian Wildlife Service staff near Last Mountain Lake. Several prescribed burns were done to



clean out invasive species. The seeding site was also sprayed twice with Roundup to kill any introduced plants like grasses and noxious weeds. She plans to spray it once more this summer before seeding the area.

"It's incredible - every foot there must be 100 plants that are different," said Chaplin, who has gathered books and attended seminars on identifying the various species.

Biologists estimate that as many as 250 plant species compete and co-operate on our native prairie. The Chaplin site is mixed grass prairie and so is dominated by midgrasses such as wheatgrass and needlegrass, and short grasses like blue grama.

Kerry Hecker, an ecologist with Conservation Corporation in Regina and consultant on this restoration project, discovered seven different shrubs, 14 grasses and more than 50 wildflowers during a hike. "It was amazing because they had just finished a burn and a lot were blooming," said Hecker.

Even though there are fields of flowers in the summer, Chaplin has no plans to collect the seeds and sell them. It's tempting when seeds from native plants can vary from \$5-\$6 a kilogram to in excess of \$1,000/kg. But, all the seeds will be needed to reseed the rest of the project area.

This summer, a four-foot corridor will be planted around one area to protect it from exotic weeds and flowers invading the area. As well, she will be buying an estate sprayer and a pull-type seed stripper that can be pulled behind a quad, all to make the job a little easier. A student will also be hired part-time to help reduce the workload.

Chaplin said she will continue to keep her bee hives and graze 31 bison in Coulee 27. It's believed that historically bison intensively grazed the prairie acting as an important tool in keeping native prairie in a healthy state.

"The bison feel right at home," said Chaplin. "They have all they need. We put out mineral blocks and they won't touch them. None have been sick or treated. They're totally organic bison. We collected dung and they're free of worms and parasites."

Hecker said this is a large restoration project and a longterm commitment will be needed.

"They've got two of the more natural disturbances, fire and bison. Hopefully, this will be one of the more natural restorations in the province simply because of those two factors," said Hecker.

Chaplin, a former florist, interior decorator and designer, is committed to restoring the old. It took several years to restore the Hudson's Bay Store Mall and eight years to lovingly renovate their farm house. It may take 10 years or so to restore Coulee 27.

"We truly believe in our heart how important it is to remember. If you don't care about some of these things, they'll be forgotten."

Ruby-throated Hummingbird

by Dr. Glen McMaster



Photo credit: Edgar T. Jones, courtesy of the Provincial Museum of Alberta, Edmonton, Alberta

Ruby-throated Hummingbirds may be the smallest birds in Saskatchewan, weighing only 3-4 grams, but they're no shrinking violets. Males, with their metallic green backs and brilliant red throats, quarrel with their squeaky voices and dive-bomb each other at prime feeding locations. Females lack the ruby throat of the males, but will also often bicker over control of a favourite flower. Hummingbirds arrive in Saskatchewan in late May from wintering grounds as far south as Costa Rica. Hummers are easily attracted to yards by nectar feeders placed out in May, and by flowers later in the summer. Not surprisingly for a bird that feeds on flowers, hummingbirds respond vigorously to bright colours; more than one red-shirted gardener has been surprised by the buzzy flight of a hummingbird hovering a foot away looking for a meal. Hummingbirds beat their wings in a figure 8 pattern at rates of 55 beats per second, allowing them to fly forward or backward, up or down, or hover motionless

to feed on flowers that would otherwise be out of reach. Hummingbird nests are built on descending tree limbs, and are constructed on bud scales bound with spider silk, lined with plant down, and often are decorated with green lichens on the outside. Two white unmarked eggs about the size of a Q-tip head are laid, and the female assumes all the duties of incubation and feeding the young, leaving the male to quarrel at the nearest watering hole. While the majority of hummingbird diet is nectar, they also dine on small insects. How does such a small bird migrate all the way to Central America? Folklore claims hummingbirds hitch rides on the backs of geese, but we now know they leapfrog their way south between flower patches, defending them from other hummingbirds, moths and even bees. While many hummingbirds reach Central America via Mexico, some hummers double their body weight with fat reserves and fly nonstop 1600 km across the Gulf of Mexico!

Dr. Glen McMaster is an avian ecologist with the Saskatchewan Wetland Conservation Corporation. While he is currently conducting surveys to monitor populations of grassland songbirds in Saskatchewan, Dr. McMaster has also produced a series of columns about "backyard birds." These columns, which include the one published in this newsletter, are intended to raise the awareness of birds commonly found in Saskatchewan.



Workshops Highlight Landowner Projects

As a landowner, the decision to conserve native prairie may be done for a variety of reasons including economics, the preservation of archeological areas, or simply the enjoyment of nature's beauty and the wildlife that share it.

But for those who agree to share their native prairie with others - the choice to conserve it has an impact on more than just the local ecosystem.

Kerry Hecker, an ecologist with the Conservation Corporation, said that when a Native Prairie Stewardship project is used as a demonstration site, it becomes a valuable resource for workshops, case studies in extension materials and displays as well as newspaper articles to promote public awareness.

"The benefits are not only to the voluntary stewards who do the project - it's to all the neighbors and professionals in the area. They're participating in spreading

information and education," she said, noting word of mouth and public tours are very effective in showing how stewardship works.

"The workshops, for example, are great for demonstrating ecologically and economically sound management practices to a variety of people. These may include landowners, project funders, policy makers and even administrators in government. Through these demonstration projects, we can show them different ways of doing things."

Referring to field days held in early June, Hecker said a workshop in the west central region included visits to Philip and Sheila Wandler's project at Denzil and Murray Ball and Joan Makaroff's project at Neilburg. At the first site, participants looked at the use of seeded pasture to reduce pressure on native grass while the second stop focused on the use of fire as a management tool.

Later in the month, back-to-back workshops at Biggar and Blaine Lake incorporated the use

of demonstration projects established several years ago. Dean Tavanetz, whose project is featured in the Native Prairie Management Guide, discussed the types of forages he is using to defer grazing on his fescue prairie. Cecil Burima and Colleen Scissons, who also developed a grazing rotation, showed how their new management plan and watering system improved the health of their cattle.

In addition to presentations by landowners, Hecker said these workshops provided "local experts" with the opportunity to meet with area producers as well. Brendan Kowalenko, a rangeland specialist with the Grazing and Pasture Technology Program in Unity, played an active role in each of the Native Prairie workshops.

Gary Neil, who is Saskatchewan Environment and Resource Management's fire boss for the northern agriculture region, also participated and shared some of his experiences in using fire to improve native prairie. Neil, who discussed how a controlled burn includes specific requirements for temperature, wind speed and humidity, also volunteered to help Murray Ball and Joan Makaroff with a specific plan for their burn.

Satisfied with the assistance he's already received for his project - and eager to share the benefits - Cecil Burima concluded that being a Native Prairie Steward is well worth the commitment.

"I'm having so much fun with the project that I'm talking about it all the time. We have a definite attachment to the ground we live on. So to see that we can actually have a positive impact on these four miles we're stewards of is really quite satisfying," he said.



At a workshop held in the Denzil area in June, Brendan Kowalenko of the Grazing and Pasture Technology Program explained the use of tame pasture to defer spring grazing of native grass.



Partners Promote Stewardship

Through the "Reconnecting Land and People Project" and the "Community Watershed Stewardship Program" funded by Millenium Bureau of Canada, staff from the Saskatchewan Wetland Conservation Corporation had a busy summer hosting 15 workshops for both landowners and extension staff across the province.

In locations ranging from Consul to Canora, these field days were also sponsored by organizations such as the Grazing and Pasture Technology Program, Prairie Farm Rehabilitation Administration, Saskatchewan Agriculture and Food and Ducks Unlimited Canada.

Tom Harrison, a rangeland specialist for the Conservation Corporation, said that with topics such as range and riparian (streambank) management, grazing rotations, plant identification and remote watering site development, the field days generated a lot of interest from local producers.

For the most part, he said the success of the workshops stemmed from "landowners talking to landowners."

"When a producer like Danny Lechures of Swift Current has something to say, other farmers tend to listen. For example, when he can show them how his new watering site is helping his rotational grazing system - it adds credibility to what stewardship projects are all about," said Harrison.

At the same time, Harrison noted that participants were able to learn more about the types of projects supported by each organization. And for representatives of these groups - it was also an opportunity to strengthen partnerships.

"The more we can work together in a particular area, the closer we all come to achieving our common goal of conservation. In the meantime, we can also do a better job of communicating with the people who manage our resources," he said.



Sharing Ideas

(Top & Middle Photos)

Participants in a grazing management field day travelled by horse and wagon to tour the R.M. of Elfrus Community pasture in the Quill Lakes region. Here, pasture patrons were shown the impact of a rotational grazing system and watering sites developed through the co-operative efforts of the Saskatchewan Wetland Conservation Corporation, the R.M. and Ducks Unlimited Canada.



(Bottom Photo)

Participants in a field day hosted by the Consul, Eastend and Tompkins Grazing Clubs made a stop at the Dry Coulee Grazing Co-op Pasture. This tour was sponsored by the Conservation Corporation, Grazing and Pasture Technology Program, Prairie Farm Rehabilitation Administration and Saskatchewan Agriculture and Food.



Partner Profile

Customers who contribute to the Canada Trust Friends of the Environment Foundation can watch their investment grow at the Regina Plain Native Prairie Seed Nursery.

Ray Waruk, a Canada Trust branch manager from Regina, said the nursery is just one example of what can be accomplished when a corporation supports community based initiatives.

"Since 1990, the Regina Chapter of the Friends of the Environment Foundation has funded 85 local environmental projects to the tune of \$104,000," he said.

While the foundation was originally established as a national program in 1990, regional chapters soon took root across the country in locations such as Regina, Moose Jaw and Saskatoon.

"Customers have the opportunity to contribute to the Foundation by making direct contributions or by having the amount they choose to donate actually debited from their account on a monthly basis," said Waruk, adding "Canada Trust will match those contributions up to \$1 million per year."

To complement the financial backing of the community, Waruk said Canada Trust also includes customers in the process of reviewing project applications.

"The board of directors is comprised of two Canada Trust employees and up to five Canada Trust customers who come onto the board for a three-year period. Every year we rotate some of the people through those particular positions," he said.

In some cases, environmental projects may be reviewed by more than one regional chapter. The Native Prairie Stewardship Program's seed nursery, for example, received funding from both the Moose Jaw and Regina branches of the Friends of the Environment Foundation.

Waruk said the nursery was of particular interest because of its environmental impact.



Seeds of Support

Ray Waruk of the Canada Trust Friends of the Environment Foundation looks at a display which shows pictures of the Regina Plain Native Prairie Seed Nursery being established in the spring of 1999. The display, which was set up during tours of the garden, was used to show funders and other supporters how the restoration project took root.

"A lot native prairie grassland has been taken out of operation and turned over to farm land and agricultural use. In order to get some of those native species re-established, the Board felt that there was a need to provide an area where the grasses could be grown," he said, adding "Anything that is benefitting the environment on an ongoing basis is certainly something we should all be concerned about."

Although Canada Trust's regional chapters are located in major centres, the impact of the Friends of the Environment Foundation is being felt throughout the province.

"There's no one place that the support goes," said Waruk. "We've got four branches of Canada Trust here in Regina - so our funding can pretty much help anywhere in southern Saskatchewan."

Some of the projects funded so far include a boardwalk project at Moose Mountain Park; recycling bins in provincial parks; Friends of the Eastend Museum; Prairie Wind and Silver Sage - Friends of Grassland National Park; Nature Saskatchewan - Living by Water project; Regina Habitat for Humanity (education and advertising for recycling depot) and the Saskatchewan Burrowing Owl Interpretive Centre.

"There's lots of interesting little projects there," said Waruk noting the Foundation has helped smaller initiatives such as the native garden project at the St. Angela Merici School and the Regina Natural History Society Bluebird project.

"These are fairly small organizations that don't have access to funding. So when you are able to provide \$800 to an organization like that it's a lot of money," said Waruk, adding the business world has much to contribute when it comes to keeping the environment healthy.

"Anytime corporations can get involved and help spearhead the organization and maintenance of foundations that are going to have a positive impact on the communities we operate in - that's a wonderful thing."

For more information about the Canada Trust Friends of the Environment Foundation, check the website www.CanadaTrust.com or contact Ray Waruk, c/o Canada Trust - 4626 Albert St. Regina, Sask. S4S 6B4.

Native Prairie Stewardship Program Targets Missouri Coteau

Starting this fall, the Native Prairie Stewardship Program will be expanding into the Missouri Coteau region of south central Saskatchewan.

Kerry Hecker, an ecologist with the Conservation Corporation, said the Coteau is an attractive area in which to promote the program because of the diversity of natural habitat that exists. Along with an estimated 31 per cent of native prairie remaining, the Coteau landscape is pocketed with sloughs often referred to as "prairie potholes" or "prairie jewels."

But before staff begin to contact any potential new stewards, surveys will have to be done.

"Right now we're making sure that we have an accurate picture of where the native prairie is," said Hecker, noting that aerial photography is being used to help pinpoint areas of native grassland.

"We can tell the areas which are native by looking for 'texture' differences. From the air, potholes which have been cultivated around have very distinct edges, and we can sometimes see straight lines left from cultivation or seeding. Native prairie potholes have no real edges, they seem to blend into the surrounding prairie very smoothly, and the grass itself would have no lines through it," she said.

This method, however, is not one hundred per cent correct. As some air photomaps are too light or dark to provide the kind of contrast needed, Hecker said program staff will be out in the field to verify the information.

Hecker also pointed out that although surveys for native prairie totalling 14 million acres have been done since 1995, the Missouri Coteau was not included because of the program's focus on remnant prairie.

"We've done surveys of a lot of the province already - but we only did representative samples of the more highly cultivated areas in the province such as around Regina, Moose Jaw, Weyburn, and then up around North Battleford and Saskatoon," said Hecker. "As you can appreciate, doing the entire province of Saskatchewan in detailed rangeland inventory would take a fair bit of time so we didn't do it all."

While the Coteau is being added to the inventory of the Native Prairie Stewardship Program - Hecker said other conservation groups have taken notice of the region's unique features as well.

"The topography is pretty rugged which is part of the reason that a lot of native prairie hasn't been cultivated on it. So you get a real concentration of critters in there such as the shorebirds, waterfowl, grassland songbirds and then larger mammals as well just because there's so much native habitat there - and so much water. I think other organizations have seen that too," she said.

But each group has a slightly different focus. Hecker assured, "We're going to do our best not to confuse people about which of us are working where and why."

The Native Prairie Stewardship Program will continue to provide technical - and possibly financial support to landowners who would like to implement management plans to conserve their native prairie.

"These people are stewards of the land and are taking care of this heritage for all of us, and we hope to give them more support than they've been receiving in the past. It can be a financial benefit to them - and I think it will be an ecological benefit to everybody."

An evaluation of programs in the Missouri Coteau:

Cropland Conversion

To evaluate the logistic and economic benefits of a Cropland Conversion Program in the Missouri Coteau, staff from the Saskatchewan Wetland Conservation Corporation assessed 114 landowner projects this past summer. This included; 19,333 acres of native pasture, 16,343 acres of tame pasture and 310 wetlands. The program, developed as a pasture expansion program by the Conservation Corporation in 1995, expanded to include conversion to hay through a partnership with Ducks Unlimited. To be eligible, landowners must have native prairie adjacent to wetlands. As a follow up to the summer's assessments, staff will be consulting producers about a variety of conservation issues.

Grassland Songbird and Waterfowl evaluation

Staff from the Conservation Corporation's Biological Services Unit have also been busy conducting wildlife surveys in the Coteau. Through a partnership with Ducks Unlimited and the Institute for Wetland and Waterfowl Research, they have been examining nest productivity of waterfowl and songbirds on haylands. This region is of interest to researchers because it is a high density area for a number of species such as the northern pintail - a waterfowl species which is still in decline.

Community Service Award Presented

Partners FOR the Saskatchewan River Basin and the Saskatchewan Wetland Conservation Corporation have been awarded the Canadian Society of Landscape Architects Community Service Award. This award is presented to organizations in the community that provide leadership, education and special initiatives to protect the environment. The two organizations received the award in recognition of their Voluntary Watershed Monitoring Program.

Through this program, groups including 4-H members, high school students and cottage owners can learn how to monitor the quality of water in their own communities. The main goal of the program is to increase the awareness and education among the general public and stakeholders on the need to maintain the health, native biodiversity and ecological integrity of a watershed ecosystem.



Judy Kaufman of the Saskatchewan Wetland Conservation Corporation shows Bronson Beauprez how to plant willows at Beaver Creek south of Saskatoon.

Coming Events

October 23 - 24

**Eco Tourism 2000 Conference -
Saskatoon, SK**

**"Growing the Gold - Guarding the
Green"**

The emphasis of the conference will be on solving ecotour business and marketing concerns. Early registration is \$70, plus \$25 for the banquet. For more information contact Peter Jonker by phone at (306) 966-5552, fax at (306) 966-5567 or by e-mail: peter.jonker@usask.ca Visit the conference website at www.extension.usask.ca/conferences/ecotourism for information and to register

November 8

**Video: Caring For a Prairie Treasure
Produced by the Saskatchewan Wetland
Conservation Corporation & PFRA**

This educational 28 minute video presents the value and function of riparian (steambank) areas, and profiles six Saskatchewan landowners discussing their management techniques. It will be aired by the Saskatchewan Communication Network (SCN) on November 8, 2000. Please check your local listing for times. For more information contact Sharon Metz at (306) 787-9290 or smetz@wetland.sk.ca

December 1, 2 & 3

**Have Yourself A Prairie Little Christmas - Val
Marie Grasslands National Park, Parks
Canada**

This event features a winter hike in the Park with a visit from Santa, with an old-fashioned concert in the one room school the next evening. Fees apply. For more information contact (306) 298-2257 or e-mail: grasslands_info@pch.gc.ca

February 22 - 25, 2001

**6th Prairie Conservation & Endangered
Species Conference
Winnipeg, MB**

The conference provides a forum to discuss the latest issues, information, research and trends in the conservation of prairie landscape and species. It affords an excellent opportunity for divergent prairie interest groups to explore ideas and approaches to sustain landowners and users as well as the rich natural heritage that is the endowment of all prairie dwellers. Topics will include prairie habitat and land use, prairie population issues, global pressures on the prairies, and sharing common ground. The organizing committee is now calling for papers and posters. For more information see the website <http://iisd.ca/wetlands/pcesc/default.htm>

Please note, for a current update on coming events, check our website at www.wetland.sk.ca

Share Your Ideas . . .

Anyone with story ideas or coming events is welcome to share them with us at:

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Canada Millennium Partnership Program
Canada Trust Friends of the Environment Foundation

Canadian Wildlife Service and World Wildlife Fund through:

- Endangered Species Recovery Fund
- Ducks Unlimited Canada
- National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (U.S.)

Saskatchewan Environment and Resource Management through:

- Fish and Wildlife Development Fund
- Saskatchewan Wetland Conservation Corporation
- SaskPower Shand Greenhouse
- Wildlife Habitat Canada